

Name:

Sharon McTavish Ross

How long have you lived in the L'Anse Creuse Community?

18 years

Have you served on any school or district committees? If so, please list committees and your role (chair, co-chair, or participant).

I have served on the following District committees:

Board Operating Procedures, Building and Site, Finance/Internal Audit, Labor (chaired in 2015), Student Assessment and Curriculum, Summer Board Workshop Chair 2014, Building Utilization, Summer Board Workshop Co-Chair 2015, Fall Board Workshop Co-Chair 2015, District School Improvement, Parent Advisory, Student Advisory, Reinstatement Review (Expulsion), Wellness, and yearly Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter Board Workshops.

I have served on the following External Organizations/Committees:

Macomb County School Board Association (MSCBA) Legislative Committee for the past three years and currently serving, Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) Government Relations for past three years (3 year appointment) and National School Board Association (NSBA) (Advocacy) Federal Relations Network for the past three years and currently serving.

Do you attend Board of Education meetings, if so how often?

Yes, for the past four years, every meeting except for a couple.

A few times prior to my election to the Board of Education

Have you served as a volunteer in the community? If so, for what organization?

My husband, Bob, and I have served as Science Olympiad Coaches at Green Elementary years ago when our son was a student there. We also served at LCN with the Boys Swim Team when our son was on the team, helping with fundraising, concessions, meets, etc. I served as the Fundraising Chair for LCN

Marching Crusaders a few years ago, was on the Band Booster By-Laws Committee, and Bob and I were active Band Booster parents for both of our children during their four years in the LCN band.

In years past, I have volunteered with the American Heart Association and the Children's Leukemia Foundation of Michigan. I was also active in Children's Ministry at my church for many years.

Family:

Spouse: Bob Ross

Children: Charles, LCN '13 and Carolynn, LCN '16.

How many in LCPS? Insert answer here - No text limit

Career:

Retired 2013, self-employed Medical Transcriptionist for over 18 years.

Prior to being self-employed, which I did to be home with our children, I worked for over 15 years as a Medical Transcriptionist/Medical Secretary and Clinical Cancer Trials Coordinator for the oldest Hematology-Oncology practice in Southeastern Michigan.

Education:

Macomb Community College, Associates Degree General Studies/Liberal Arts.

Ross Medical Education Center, 1 year Medical Transcription Certificate.

What do you think is the purpose of the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Board of Education?

The Board of Education has a number of purposes. It is responsible for setting the vision and goals for the district. The Board works with the Superintendent, whose job it is to implement these goals district-wide. Our purpose is to make sure we have students achieving their best, highest abilities, and be knowledgeable as they graduate to college or career technical jobs. I believe the charge to the Board of Education is a very noble one, as we are responsible for each and every student in our district. I do not take this charge lightly.

If policies need changing or revising, that is something the Board is responsible for. The financial well being of our district is a charge of the Board. The Board works together, putting differences aside and agreeing to disagree if need be, for the betterment of our students, staff, and community. We are L'Anse Creuse!!

What particular or added dimensions would you bring to the Board if voted in?

I believe my ability to listen and appreciate a point of view other than my own for the betterment of our students and district are an asset we very much need in L'Anse Creuse. Respect and integrity are added dimensions that would go far in helping us get back to the community that is L'Anse Creuse, and propel us forward.

What do you feel are the three most positive aspects of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools?

I believe the people we have fighting for this district are our greatest, most positive aspect of LCPS.

Our education programs are phenomenal and extremely varied. I am so proud of that!

ALL of our staff doing amazing things every day despite many outside forces coming against them and yet, they rise to the occasion every time!

I was instrumental in getting an "anonymous" forum on our district webpage so that our employees feel that they have a voice, free of fear and retribution. which has been an issue for some. I would like to see more use of this, but am heartened by those who have availed themselves of this tool

What do you feel are the three greatest challenges facing L'Anse Creuse Public Schools?

Finances: No matter what a district does, if the State continues to give more and more monies that belong to public K-12 education (that does not include charters, especially for-profit charters), then we will continue to have the financial issues we have. No matter how much and no matter how long we have been cutting the budget in this district, these problems will remain.

The State needs to be held accountable for what is happening financially in public education in Michigan in general, and in L'Anse Creuse Public Schools in particular. The underfunded retirement system for school employees (actually, and State employees!) is so large a piece of our budget that we cannot possibly continue this way. The State also has missed their 100% payment this year into this system; they did the same thing last year. That deficit will fall on our shoulders. The Constitution of the State of Michigan mandates K-12 education. The financial state of our schools, at the hands of the Lansing government, is inexcusable. Trying running your household on such a deficit. This liability is on every district in Michigan.

The way the State of Michigan funds true K-12 public schools has not been good since they tried to make it equitable with Proposal A in 1994. This was then, and continues to be now, an issue of great

(negative) financial impact on most districts also. Had harmless districts are a good example of what still isn't right about our funding. We have unfunded mandates from the State, but they recently voted to give monies for this to private/parochial schools. Unconstitutional!

Declining enrollment: The loss of students through declining birth rates, which will continue for the foreseeable future, has been greatly affecting the district (and all Michigan districts) financially; actually, in every way, as that necessitates smaller classes resulting in employee layoffs top to bottom, etc. This in turn causes the district to get smaller by a significant number every year.

Dysfunction of the LCPS Board of Education The entire State of Michigan education community is aware of our school board and our inability to function cohesively for the betterment of our students, staff, district, and community. We are an embarrassment across the State. This to me is unconscionable and despite our best efforts, has not been able to be turned around. We certainly can have our differing opinions and thought processes, but the end result should be respect for the opinions of others, especially if we don't agree with said opinion. I appreciate that sometimes voices may get raised, but that should be the exception, not the rule. Name calling and swearing are unacceptable at any time. This behavior is counterproductive to the job at hand. It is also an embarrassment to the district, the employees, the students and their families, and to the community. It needs to stop once and for all.

What is your understanding of how our schools are financed? How could the district maintain a balanced budget?

Our schools are financed by a combination of sources from local, State, and Federal monies. The State of Michigan gives schools funding on a per pupil basis.

Maintaining a balanced budget in this era of school funding is especially difficult as each time an increase comes our way, it goes right back out for underfunded benefits. This district has, for well over 13+ years now, been doing a great deal of cutting of spending to address these funding issues/inequities. The idea to balance something is to get more money than you spend. This is not a new thing to this district and I believe we have done a great job, but there is still work to be done as the incoming still is less than the outgoing. Do realize a lot of this is simply a result of what Lansing is doing with the monies. Colleges and universities are getting greater funding for their budgets as we are getting less, and with increasing unfunded mandates. We need to continue to have the programs/classes/support/services that we do on less and less money.

There is no question that staffing and program allocations must change as the district enrollment changes, but that is often seen after the school year has begun (final counts, etc.) and the budget has been set based on most likely projections. It is a difficult, but not totally insurmountable balance.

The biggest way I believe we can maintain a balanced budget is for Lansing to get this funding right. We cannot do a thing about declining enrollment, and every district in the State is trying to tweak something to make them more desirable for potential students. We are chasing the same students and the same monies. (

What is your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the overall operations of L'Anse Creuse Public Schools?

I see our strengths as coming from our committed staff, students, parents, and community. We have had for years an incredibly wonderful reputation. This has gotten lost in the recent past, but I believe our will to fight for this will triumph.

I see our weakness as the current state of the LCPS Board of Education.

If you win a seat on the Board of Education, what would you seek to accomplish?

I would seek to accomplish a unified, cohesive Board. We need to be civilized and respectful to each other at all times. We are the face of the district and right now, that face is not pretty.

We will have a new Superintendent next year, and I believe this to be a great time to restart a functional relationship between the Board of Education and Superintendent.

To what extent do you think Board members should be involved in legislative activities?

I firmly believe in being engaged with the policy makers, which is why I have been on the MISD Legislative Committee and the MASB Government Relations Committee., and have gone to Washington, D.C. twice with the NSBA (Advocacy) Federal Relations Network to advocate for public education.

I think it especially important for Board Members to attend the MASB CBA classes that are offered each year, throughout the year. There is so much information and current legislation that is germane to our positions as Board members being learned at these conferences. This helps Board Members be better informed in all aspects of Board membership, including dealing with our Legislature on any and all issues. Great resource.

I believe in local control of the Board of Education. To the extent that the U.S. Department of Education (unconstitutional) and the Michigan State Board of Education interfere with local control, this Board needs to stand up and fight back.

Additional comments:

This is the end of my fourth year on the Board. I truly feel called to this Board and feel I have work to finish yet. There are many issues and challenges facing all school districts in Michigan, including L'Anse Creuse Public Schools, and these need to be remedied. I am not yet done!!